THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Application forms for availing benefits under the reward schemes of Duty Free Credit Entitlement Scheme and Target Plus Scheme were notified on the 7th April, 2005.

(b) As per the details received from our field formations only one application has been received between 8th April to 20th April, 2005.

(c) The notifications were kept in abeyance under Policy Circular No. 2 (RE-2005)/2004-09 dated 20th April, 2005 in response to representations from Trade and Industry for procedural simplification in the application forms. The modified application forms have been re-notified *vide* Public Notice No. 16 (RE-2005)/2004-09 dt. 4.6.2005.

Impact of sanitary and phytosanitary standards on farm-exports

957. SHRI R.K. ANAND:
SHRI K.B. KRISHNAMURTHY:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether country's farm-export is facing non-tariff barriers due to sanitary and phytosanitary standards by some countries;

(b) if so, how many such cases been reported in the past three years and what steps have been taken;

(c) whether these sanitary and phytosanitary standards are in line with WTO agreements, if so, the details of such provisions and do we comply with such standards; and

(d) what steps are being taken to safeguard country's farm-exports from such non-tariff barriers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Instances of use of non-tariff barriers (NTBs), especially in the form of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards, on India's farm export by some countries have been noticed during the past few years.

(b) A number of instances of adoption or imposition of standards or measures on farm exports has been reported. If measures are based on evidence of science, and are not being used in an arbitrary and discriminatory manner, they are deemed to be compatible with the WTO provisions.

In case the exporters find that the imposed or adopted standards or measures are not based on evidence of science, and are being used in an arbitrary and discriminatory manner which is hurting their trade, they inform this Ministry either individually or through the export promotion councils, and the matter is suitably taken up at the bilateral level with the country concerned or in the SPS Committee of the WTO.

(c) The SPS Agreement encourages Members to base their SPS measures on international standards, guidelines and recommendations as developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and the International Office of Epizootics (OIE). It also allows Members to introduce or maintain SPS measures which result in a higher level of SPS protection than would be achieved by measures based on the relevant international standards, guidelines or recommendations if there is a scientific justification. India strives to comply with the provisions of the SPS Agreement.

(d) To protect country's farm exports from such non-tariff barriers, a number of steps have been initiated which, *inter alia,* including holding bilateral and joint commission meetings, effective participation in the SPS Committee meetings, improving sanitary and phytosanitary conditions of country's overall exports by establishing and strengthening of certification agencies like Export Inspection Council (EIC), capacity and awareness building of concerned exporters through trainings, seminars, introducing compulsory testing regimes for certain specified commodities before shipping and giving financial assistance for quality testing of certain specified exportable produces.

Bilateral trade with BIMST countries

958. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that while our bilateral trade with other countries is picking up, the Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka